



CONNECTICUT FAMILY SUPPORT COUNCIL
Meeting Minutes
September 11, 2014

The formal part of the CT Family Support Council meeting was held after the Annual Retreat. For the Retreat, Jonathan Slifka, the Governor's Liaison to the Disability Community and Craig Henrici, the new Executive Director of the Office of Protection and Advocacy for Persons with Disabilities (OPA) were guests. Robin Wood also gave a presentation regarding the Supporting Families Community of Practice.

Location: Camp Harkness, Waterford, Connecticut

In attendance: Wade Chartier, Sharon Dexler, April Dipollina, Sylvia Gafford-Alexander, Ann Gionet, Colleen Hayles, Steven Hernandez, Karen Hlavac, Sara Lourie, Linda Mizzi, Marcus Rivera, Lisa Sheppard, Mona Tremblay, Robyn Trowbridge, Robin Wood

Absent: Maureen Smith, Renee Toper

Guest: Cassandra Manger, an intern with Robin Wood at DDS, was present for the meeting.

Call to Order: 1:15 pm

Public Comment: None

Approval of July Minutes - Robyn Trowbridge made a motion to accept the minutes as written, which was seconded by April Dipollina and the minutes were approved with abstentions from Karen Hlavac, Marcus Rivera and Colleen Hayles.

Announcements

Because the date of the meeting of 9/11, a moment of silence was observed in honor of victims and their families.

Colleen Hayles announced that this is her last meeting; Marcus Rivera will be the new representative for the State Department of Education (SDE) on the Council and this is his first meeting. Everyone wished the best of luck to Colleen, who will be missed and welcomed Marcus to his first official CTFSC meeting.

Robin Wood discussed the family meeting held with Jonathan Slifka, Governor's Liaison to the Disability Community. Families presented their stories and it was emphasized that it is important to

have positive stories disseminated to the public, Governor and Legislature so that there is balance in terms of what is being heard - not just the negative issues and problems.

Linda Mizzi discussed a plan for OPA to develop a brochure for transition coordinators and special education teachers. The focus is on school transition for children with disabilities. Colleen Hayles and Marcus Rivera recommend that she connect with Pat Anderson around transition activities and resources within SDE.

Colleen Hayles announced that this week marks the second annual conference on the reduction of restraint and seclusion; this brings together state and quasi-state agencies with consumers to discuss this important topic. It was well attended last year and even more individuals have registered this year plus there is a waiting list.

Sara Lourie announced the dissemination of the draft children's behavioral health plan by DCF and encouraged Council members to review the document and send in comments by the end of the week.

April Dipollina announced the candidate's forum on disabilities at Manchester Community College on October 9. This is presented by the Connecticut Cross Disability Lifespan Alliance for which Melissa Marshall is the Chair. Linda Mizzi added that quite a few candidates are expected and they will all be asked to address the same set of questions.

Ann Gionet announced that the Ct Lifespan Respite Coalition is no longer funded through the Department of Public Health (DPH) but the funding was moved to FAVOR - this represents the lifespan portion of the medical home initiative. She noted that more information is available on the DPH website.

Ann provided an update on several RFP's in process including the 2015 bid for respite and extended service funds.

April indicated that the Creative Housing initiative is starting up its monthly meetings after a break in August.

Family Membership/Brochure - Linda Mizzi indicated that the Partners in Policy making volunteer had to leave the program and was not available to work on the brochure. Ann Gionet followed up with Judicial printing and passed out a sample of their work and mentioned the significant amount of experience they have. Staff there has agreed to work with the Family Support Council to develop the brochure.

There was a lot of discussion about the purpose of the brochure and the need to utilize this as a way to get people interested in the Council. Linda, Ann and April volunteered to work on the brochure and come up with a draft.

The question of the extent to which the Council can "vet" potential members was also raised. It is understood that all members, except state agency representatives are appointed by a Legislator or the Governor. The question is the extent to which the Council can make recommendations to the appointing authority. Several other examples were given of other council/committees also legislatively mandated in which the group reviews membership applications and forwards them to appointing authority with a recommendation to appoint. Lisa Sheppard agreed to check on this as it relates to this Council with the DDS Legislative Liaison.

Adjournment: **Karen Hlavac** made a motion to adjourn and Ann Gionet seconded it; the meeting was adjourned at 2:12 pm.

Minutes submitted by Sara Lourie, Secretary